[Dialogue between Speakers and Participants]

Shin-ichi Ishihara (JICA)

Thank you very much to Mary Nakabugo for an overview of the South-South cooperation and I was very impressed with the wording ‘self-reliance’ and ‘sustainability’. What I learned from her presentation is that in any dialogue there is a mutual interest and based on this similar interest, there is the potential for networking in ways to provide mutual benefits. That is probably something we can discuss a bit later. Furthermore she pointed out the importance of financial mobilization and this is also a very critical issue and one we are thinking about now as Asia is emerging not only financially but also in the expertise of national experts whom we are supporting in their countries. So JICA or the Japanese stance is that without that, you cannot sustain this kind of network. Thank you very much to Azian Abdullah as well for your presentation. I feel your facility might be better than the JICA facility and it is kind of like a big competitor. Malaysia is a multilingual society and easy for foreigners to adapt to life and the climate is also very nice. JICA has conducted training programmes for African participants not only in Japan but also in Malaysia and the Philippines in the field of math and science education. This is our recent endeavor in which we promote the cooperation between Asia and Africa. I’m thinking both JICA and RECSAM focus on pedagogical aspects to improve the quality of education. And thank you very much Ono-sensei for a thoughtful presentation based on your experiences in Africa and Asia.

Well, we would like to invite the audience to interact with our panel in the question and answer session for which we have another 20 minutes and quite a number of the audience is Japanese so we don’t mind the questions in English or Japanese. I would like to proceed to the questions section, by opening the floor for discussion beginning with about three people. May I ask that you kindly mention your name and institution before your question. Thank you.

Question 1
Atsumu Iwai (MEXT)

Thank you so much for the presentation today. The Asia-Africa cooperation has been developing in a variety of sectors as well as education, such as agriculture, medium and small enterprises, health and government officers’ capacity building. The Asia-Africa cooperation will be evolving more in the future, but I think the more it will evolve, the more difficult it will become to match the needs and available resources. I would like to hear some suggestions on how AA cooperation could develop to match the needs and resources along with its quantitative expansion in the future, especially from Prof. Gorretti. One more question I have is about the outcome of training courses. From my point of view, for the training courses, a change in specific actions regarding problem solving which the trainees conduct after receiving the training courses should be the outcome. I would like to hear the experiences of RECSAM in how the organization is contriving ways to ensure these outcomes.

Question 2
Kunio Takase (International Development Center)

Thank you for your elaborate presentation of the cooperation in education. I am interested in what kind of assistance other developed countries carry out such as the UK, Germany, or the USA to Asian countries as well as African countries in education. Also what are the similarities and differences among this cooperation compared to the Japanese model?
Question 3
Shinobu Yume Yamaguchi (Tokyo Institute of Technology)

I would like to address my question to Dr. Azian Abdullah. I’m very much impressed with the variety of the training courses offered in RECSAM, each of which has different objectives ranging from improving the problem solving skills of the student to improving the teaching methods at each school level. I understand that those training courses are only in the initial stages of achieving such objectives. My question is about your scheme at RECSAM to evaluate the training course, specifically to evaluate the impact or some kind of level of achieving objectives of such a training process. One of the issues facing the training courses carried out in Japan is, to complete the training course is one thing but it is quite difficult to see the impacts or the level of achieving objectives after those trainees return to their home country. So if you could share your experiences, that would be quite a learning opportunity for Japanese institutions and Japanese ODA as well. Thank you very much.

Response from the panelists
Azian T. S. Abdullah (SEAMEO RECSAM)

Thank you. I’ll answer the questions from Yamaguchi-san. We conduct what we “call impact study”, so we send questionnaires to the participants and all of our alumni, and also to the Ministry of Education, as to how they have been able to disseminate what they have learned back home. Our problem with our participants is that they tend to forget about us when they go back home. It is difficult to get them to send back the questionnaires which are sent through the Ministry of Education, so it is the Ministry of Education who sends them to the alumni. We find it very difficult to get back those questionnaires so what we are trying to do since all of our participants have already learned to use the Internet is to send the questionnaires directly to them but we’ve not done that yet and maybe we can get a better response. But we also have what we call governing board members of 10-11 of the member countries and they meet every year with us so this is a place where we present the impact studies for them to help us. We try to get their help to contact the alumni to make sure that the alumni will disseminate the information. I’m not sure about the question in Japanese and I couldn’t really get that question but is it something about what kind of action can be taken to resolve a certain issue? I’m not very sure of the question right now so maybe I’ll let the others answer first.

Shin-ichi Ishihara (JICA)

Regarding evaluation, for example, we can use projects in which people network and assess how their capability has improved upon return to their home country. We believe that the actual project is just the starting point, and it is difficult to see improvements from just the training alone. The extent of the project does indeed include what those who participated have learned and hence what the training course has rendered. However, RECSAM is also changing Africa with a variety of informal exchanges of information which occur as a result of the networks formed in the planned activities.

Mary Goretti Nakabugo (Makerere University, Uganda)

Thanks for all of those responses. It means that you are following our presentations. Takase-san about what other donors are doing bilaterally or multi-laterally as far as South-South cooperation in education involving Africa and Asia is concerned, I would like to point out that there are not so many cases. Perhaps one example is the DFI-funded projects involving developing countries - but not necessarily African and Asian countries only. For example, there is one in which Uganda is participating, and it brings together three African countries and one UK partner to develop the capacity of teachers in post-conflict areas. One unique characteristic of the DFID-supported SSC projects is that they
are coordinated by one of the developing countries. In the case of the capacity-building project for teachers in post-conflict areas, Uganda plays the coordinating role. The change that is required in the SSC projects presented earlier that are being supported by Japan is to develop coordination capacity in the South. At the moment, all of them are being coordinated by Japanese institutions. We need to move into the next phase of building coordination capacity in developing countries.

Shin-ichi Ishihara (JICA)

Another question was put forth by the gentleman regarding the needs of Africa and how we can accommodate these needs through linkage with Asia. As the needs are quite diverse, when we think about future cooperation in Asia and Africa, the question of how this need assessment will be adequately conducted and the process of match-making resources will become very important.

Mary Goretti Nakabugo (Makerere University, Uganda)

Well today we are focusing on South-South cooperation in education, but of course it would be a good idea or opportunity to have South-South cooperation involving other disciplines if it were possible. I think another idea is to broaden the discussion beyond the roles of Japan, to include the roles of other donor agencies. What are other donor agencies doing? Could we have a model of successful South-South cooperation that could be replicated by other donation agencies?

Shin-ichi Ishihara (JICA)

Let me comment on two things. When we have cooperation based in Africa, we should identify what kind of networking is being utilized. By that I mean, whether it is the networking of universities or training institutions. Additionally, we must identify the mutual benefit of the cooperation to ensure that it is a win-win cooperation. Whenever I was engaged in programs in Asia, I was asked if we can replicate that model in Africa. I responded that it is important to identify what kind of benefit is being sought to see if there is the potentiality to use an existing network rather than start a new network. For example, JICA is supporting a working group on math and science education through ADEA. As ADEA is representing Africa, maybe this could be an example of such networking. I see we still have more questions coming from the floor. Thank you.

Question 4
Kaori Satake (Foundation for International Development/Relief)

I have one question on the role of NGOs in South-South cooperation. I would like to hear your opinions on it, and if you have any experiences of having collaborated with NGOs in your work. Thank you.

Question 5
Shota Hatakeyama (Kobe University)

I have one question. When we look at "education" in Japanese, it comprises two entities: one is "to teach" and the other is "to nurture". We have heard many valuable lectures today and I understand how you have been making efforts for education, which I understood as the aspect of "to teach" in education. In the case of the South-South cooperation I was not quite sure of the nurturing aspect. Could you share some experiences of the "nurturing" aspect in South-South cooperation?
Question 6
Tomoko Matsumoto (Waseda University)

Thank you so much. I have one question for Prof. Ono. I'm personally very proud of the Japanese education environment which allows us to have success in various aspects. For example, Japanese education has succeeded thanks to the sole language we use which is "Japanese". I am sure that when you are carrying out educational projects in other countries, you will face the multilingual situation which makes you reconsider the didactic methods that the Japanese traditionally have developed. In this process, is there any feedback from the educational cooperation toward the Japanese didactic methods? In Japan we also have minorities as in other foreign countries and if specific didactic methods for instruction can be studied more and developed further to suit the needs of these minorities, the educational cooperation will contribute to Japanese education in a more direct way.

Question 7
Fredie V. Avendano (Nagoya University)

I was compelled to ask a question because I felt during the discussion that you were talking about me because I was a teacher and a trainee under Monbusho (MEXT, Japan). Now I use Mary’s words, I am a recipient at high cost of this South-North cooperation by educating myself here in Japan, particularly in the Graduate School of International Development. To compliment all other questions and comments that have been raised, I agree wholeheartedly on these ideas. One thing I have learned studying in Japan is that Japan used to import technology and knowledge from the north in the past, and that is what countries in the south are doing. But Japan was able and was successful in replicating or duplicating all of these on the national scale. But the countries in the south are not able to do so. So I agree with the comments that regardless whether it is the South-South or South-North cooperation, it should be replicated on the national scale. It should not just stop at the level of individual recipients. That is the comment. My question is as a teacher and an international education student as well, I have noticed that most of the cooperation focuses on the pedagogical aspect which can be limited by the so-called social cultural constraints especially when we talk about science and mathematics. In this respect, you can also learn from countries in the south when we talk about pedagogy or strategies in teaching. But almost of the countries are encountering or facing the problem of competence in the content of the subjects which can be universalized without worry or pedagogical and cultural restraints when we talk about teaching approach.

Question 8
Duc Tran Khan (Hanoi National University, Vietnam)

I would like to ask a question to Professor Ono. In your paper, there is a point mentioning a principal with rich teaching experience. I think if teachers have very rich teaching experience they will be able to become a good principals. In the case of Vietnam, although many teachers have rich teaching experience, they cannot become a good manager or good principal because the role of teachers and the role of managers are different. I would like you to explain more about this. Maybe we must select for the role of Principal someone who has rich teaching experience while at the same time having the capacity to manage. Thank you.

Response from the panelists
Shin-ichi Ishihara (JICA)

Thank you very much for your questions and I'd like to ask all three speakers to respond very quickly.
Yumiko Ono (Naruto University)

Thank you for the questions. As to the language for instruction, it was a challenge for us, too. We were asked by South Africans if Japan knew any good approach to help learners whose first language is not English. There are 11 official languages in South Africa and all of which are regarded equally important. Unfortunately, we couldn’t offer any suggestions on multi-lingualism. Japanese public schools now have more and more Japanese as second language students, but we have little knowledge and experience on this matter. This is the area we can learn from others.

Lesson study emphasizes both content and pedagogy. I think lesson study aims at developing pedagogical content knowledge. In the case of South Africa, we were aware that teachers in South Africa need to strengthen content knowledge. But it cannot be achieved by occasional workshops by a project. Content knowledge should be developed by long-term process. South Africa has resources and universities that can help teachers to develop instructional competency. We had the University of Pretoria as a partner, who was expected to take care of that.

As to school principals, not all good teachers are good principals. In the case of Japan, there is the system of sharing responsibilities of school management by school teachers (Koumu-bunsho). Teachers belong to different sections such as curriculum management, research and training, etc. When they have become a school principal, they have experienced such roles. Whether local school boards of education have a good selection process, that is another issue.

Azian T. S. Abdullah (SEAMEO RECSAM)

I don’t know whether I can answer all the questions as they are not addressed to me. Someone asked about the nurturing aspect and when I think about science and math education we want to make sure that all the students will become scientifically and technologically literate. When you teach science you’re not just teaching the content, we need to inculcate values and attitudes as well as the skills and content.

Mary Goretti Nakabugo (Makerere University, Uganda)

One last comment about the lady who asked the role of ODA. ODA has a place. In South-South cooperation, one of the challenges that I mentioned in my presentation is the lack of financial resources to sustain existing SSC efforts. You might have a good idea but if you don’t have the capacity to mobilize resources, the discussion becomes futile. And to respond to the comment related to training in the South done by Japanese experts, it should not grow into a dependency syndrome. Whereas Japanese expertise is in education is needed, we should be moving towards finding home-grown strategies and expertise in the South.

Shin-ichi Ishihara (JICA)

Thank you very much. We are sorry we have totally run out of time despite the fact that there are more questions. Let me try to summarize. For one thing, the topic we have been covering is how to change the lessons. This is a common issue in Japan, Asia and Africa, but their approaches and methodologies are varied. The current challenge is how to evaluate them scientifically, whether the approach of lesson study is really effective or not. The next step toward the achievement of MDGs will be of course to move to education quality in the classroom and we need to pursue how the students’ achievement or learning attitudes will be changed through interaction with the teachers, and how teachers themselves will change by it. In this process many stakeholders such as Government of Japan, JICA, NGOs etc. are playing corresponding role, and the important thing is how we can draw a future vision on this. It may also be true with the South-South cooperation. All Japanese actors involved in this process need to consider what kind of direction we will pursue as All Japan team.

Thank you to all the panelists for all of their input and the participants for their active participation from the floor.
Kazuhiro Yoshida (Hiroshima University, Japan)

I would like to make a few more comments so please stay with us. The purpose of JEF is to provide an opportunity to exchange opinions freely not making specific recommendations. As we have many events this year taking this into consideration I’d like to try and summarize one or two or three important points because the time is limited.

1. As Professor Muta pointed out, JOCV is making a truly wonderful job. If this pin-point support is complemented by the support at the policy level, effectiveness will be improved. This is the direction in which Japan has a huge potential, and I believe we can do it and Japan has capacity to translate the achievements on the ground. By participation in FTI with such capacity, Japan can demonstrate its unique strength. Through its contribution to educational improvement in which schools are the forefront, Japan has a good potential to contribute to reconstructing the aid architecture.

2. Desmond Bermingham addresses 4 gaps as policy, data, finance, and capacity. In order to fill those gaps, FTI plays a very important role. But where are schools and children positioned? Some of you may have thought about that. Naturally that is quite an important factor. The international community is aware of that and is involved in this initiative. I think that was covered in the second session and that you strongly felt that too.

3. We should not forget in-service teacher training, school management and local languages. Those are the things often times ignored by the donors as was mentioned by Mr. Ndoye. But at the same time, the diversity of African countries was pointed out so we need to grasp the situation from their own context rather than from our viewpoint for the sustainable development which can only be recognized from that viewpoint.

4. We learned a lot of things and many things have been pointed out. I regard these as going to the next level so we can continue this dialogue into the future.

And now it is time to close today’s forum. I’d like to give a huge hand of applause to the two keynote speakers and I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the participants and panelists and moderators. Also to JICA and the World Bank and JBIC.